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THE SINAITIC AND VATICAN MANUSCRIPTS AND THE COPIES SENT BY EUSEBIUS TO CONSTANTINE

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Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine*, chapters xxxvi f., gives an account of the MSS. of the Scriptures prepared in Cæsarea at the command of the Emperor for the use of the churches in Constantinople, owing to the remarkable increase in the number of Christians after the conversion of the court. His account ends with a sentence which according to Schwartz, whose opinion seems obviously correct, is unfortunately incomplete. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν βασιλεὺς διεκελεύετο αὐτίκα δ' ἔργον ἐπηκολούθει τῷ λόγῳ, ἐν πολυτελῶς ἡσκημένοις τεύχεσιν τρισσὰ καὶ τετρασσὰ διαπεμψάντων ἡμῶν. . . .

It is of course well known that the meaning of *τρισσὰ καὶ τετρασσὰ* is doubtful. It has usually been taken, following Valesius, to mean "in gatherings of three and four sheets," but two alternative suggestions have been made. It has been held that it means "written in three and four columns to the page," like the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., and this view has been sometimes extended in order to identify these MSS. as of Cæsarean manufacture. It has also been maintained that it means sending them "by threes and fours."

The obvious difficulty about all these interpretations is that no evidence has been produced in their favor from the similar use of the words in passages where the meaning is clear. The interpretation "copies of three and four columns" is grammatically sound, but there appeared to be no good evidence for this technical use of the words. On grounds of general probability the view that the meaning is "sending them by threes and fours" is the

most attractive, but on grounds of strict interpretation it is the weakest. There is no evidence that *τρισά* can denote "three at a time," and a further difficulty becomes plain if an attempt be made to translate "sending them three and four at a time." I suggest the normal Greek for this would be something like *τρία καὶ τέσσαρα ἐκάστοτε διαπεμπόντων*. It seems clear that the substantive implied by *τρισά* and *τετρασά* is *ἀντίγραφα* (copies), and the meaning is that they sent the *τρισά καὶ τετρασά ἀντίγραφα* in elaborately ornamented *τεύχεσιν*. *Τεύχος* means a volume, and the *τρισά καὶ τετρασά ἀντίγραφα* were made up into these costly volumes. If it had meant that each complete copy of the Scriptures was in three or four volumes the adjectives would have agreed with *τεύχεσιν*.

But these considerations are negative and do not explain the phrase. It is therefore interesting to note that the new text of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* in the Berlin edition of Eusebius indirectly throws fresh light on the point, and is, I think, decisive in favor of the interpretation that *τρισά καὶ τετρασά* means "copies written in three and four columns."

After describing the Hexapla of Origen in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (VI 16, 4) Eusebius says, according to the older editions, *ταύτας δὲ ἀπάσας ἐπὶ ταύτον συναγαγὼν διελὼν τε πρὸς κῶλον καὶ ἀντιπαραθεῖς ἀλλήλαις μετὰ καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς Ἑβραίων σημειώσεως, τὰ τῶν λεγομένων Ἑξαπλῶν ἡμῖν ἀντίγραφα καταλέλοιπεν, ἰδίως τὴν Ἀκύλου καὶ Συμμάχου καὶ Θεοδοτίωνος ἐκδοσὶν ἅμα τῇ τῶν ἑβδομήκοντα ἐν τοῖς Τετραπλοῖς ἐπισκευάσας*. That is, Origen made an *editio minor* containing only Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and the Septuagint, and this was the "Tetrapla" as distinct from the "Hexapla." But in the new edition E. E. Schwartz reads *τετρασοῖς* instead of *τετραπλοῖς*. There can be no doubt that he is right, though I do not see why he prints *Τετρασοῖς* with a capital letter—it seems an unconscious copying of the custom of the older editions. *Τετρασοῖς* is the reading of TERBD(M) while *τετραπλοῖς* is

found only in A and Suidas, and is clearly condemned by transcriptional probability as an emendation intended to balance τῶν Ἑξαπλῶν. Nor can the meaning be doubted; it must be "in the copies arranged in four columns," one for each of the four versions, just as the Hexapla was arranged in six columns, or in more when the additional MSS. were quoted.

This evidence ought, I think, to settle the interpretation of τρισσὰ καὶ τετρασσὰ. Does it imply also that the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus, which are the only known MSS. of exactly this type, are two of those sent by Eusebius to Constantine? It is obviously shown that they belong to the same class, and is valuable evidence for their date. But the case for their origin in Egypt rather than Cæsarea is too strong to be put on one side.

This case is partly palæographical, partly textual. The Codex Sinaiticus contains a curious spelling of the word κράβατος as κραβακτος, which is also found in the papyri. Similarly the Codex Sinaiticus spells Ἰσραηλείτης as ισδραηλειτης, and the Codex Vaticanus spells it ιστραηλειτης. These forms have often been regarded as Latin; they may be so, but in this case they represent a Latinism which, on the evidence of papyri, affected Egypt and no other known Greek district, though our knowledge is limited here and may be defective. Moreover the character of the script, especially as regards a curious way of writing Omega, is found in the papyri of the same date. This evidence is slight, but it is all that palæography gives, and is typical of the difficulty of fixing the date or provenance of Greek MSS.—so much greater than is found in dealing with Latin ones.

This palæographical evidence is confirmed by textual facts. The text of the Psalms in the Codex Sinaiticus is extraordinarily like that in the early Coptic version found in the Pistis Sophia. The order of the chapters into which the Pauline Epistles is divided in the Codex

Vaticanus, as though they formed a single book, has a dislocation which shows that the archetype placed Hebrews immediately after Galatians. This resembles the order in the Sahidic version of the Festal Letter of Athanasius for the year 367, which puts Hebrews between Corinthians and Galatians, and is usually thought to represent an old Egyptian order. Moreover, the actual order of the Epistles in both codices is the same as that in the Greek text, probably the original, of the Festal Letter, placing Hebrews between Colossians and I Timothy.

Against these arguments, which point to Egypt, are the facts that the Codex Sinaiticus was corrected about two hundred years after it was written, or perhaps even later, at Cæsarea, and that it contains a chapter-numeration in the Acts which is closely related to that of Euthalius, whose work was also revised by a certain Evagrius in Cæsarea. But books are not necessarily written in the places where they were afterwards corrected, and we do not know anything certain about Euthalius. He seems to have dedicated his critical studies to Athanasius, possibly of Alexandria, but we have no real knowledge. Under these circumstances it is probably true to say that the argument for a Cæsarean origin of the two MSS. is much weaker than that in favor of Egypt.

It is possible to argue that the interpretation of *τρισσὰ καὶ τετρασσὰ* implied by Eusebius reinforces the case for Cæsarea; but I do not think that it really does more than show that in the time of Eusebius calligraphic fashion, which we may be sure obtained in Alexandria as well as in Cæsarea, demanded manuscripts written in three or four columns. In other words, this note tends to support those who date the two manuscripts early rather than late in the fourth century, but throws no fresh light on their provenance.